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Indian Legends of Alberta.

The foundation of the literature of every country lies in its mythical amd legendary lore and we notice that the greater that wealth of tradition, the vaster has heen the result in literary achievement.

And For us in Alberta, tradition is here, the spirit of inspiration is here, but waiting to be gathered together intangible form, ~~which as time passes, is be-~~ coming a sacred duty calling for our immediate attention before it is lost irretrievably.

But the ~~Indeed~~, Indian lore ~~in~~ this country is already becoming very vague, the Indians themselves have notoriously short memories, they will remember a characteristic of a person they have seen or known to their last day, but as for their myths and legends they have never been set down in characters and the old Indians are forgetting. The only hope for them being transmitted lay in the Indians' superstition and religious fears, and the Indian is neither so superstitious nor so fanatical as he once was, so he has been casting from him these old fears and beliefs. ~~Do you think an Indi~~ That Indian would be scared white by an eclipse in these days?

~~It seems to me there is already~~ In searching for material for our early history, I have found a great dearth of ~~know~~ knowledge of early Indian life. We get fragments of stories or in some cases merely hints, but ~~it seems to me that~~ every scrap is of inestimable value and surely by perseverance and by piecing together we can accomplish a basis of Indian legendary.

Just to mention a few of the legends, there is the tale of Chief Mt.,

The most complete tale I got was of Chief Mt., that the Indians believed that the Spirit of the West Wind had his home in this mountain and in an encounter with a hero from the East hurled at his enemies the vast rocks which at regular intervals form a direct line from north to south abo about 40 miles eastward. But one critic writes me, "Of course, you know that those rocks date back to the glacial period." Certainly, everything can be explained by science now-a-days, still in the interests of Indian legendary I prefer the imaginative explanation, and all of us who live in this southern part and have at one time or

another looked on at the fierce battle waged between the west and east winds, the cold white mist gathering slowly, the dark banks of clouds rolling up and scattering tumultously, the steely blue rim of the eastern horizon, then the roaring chinook breaking its barriers and sweeping all before it, can well imagine a battle of giants. Why not the Indians?

There is also a tale of an Indian chieftain of great prowess who grazed his horses, the fleetest and finest there ever were, on the 100 acres of pasture land on the top of Chief Mt, the Indians believing that there was some mythical quality in the grass growing there.

And to come to later years yet of the early history of the country, there was John George Brown, known as Koutenay Brown a white man though nothing more was ever known of him, who for 54 years before he died, ruled the destinies and the neighborhood of Chief Mt, and dying was buried as he had requested on the side of the Mt by his Indian wife, Chee-pay-tha-qua-ka-soon, the Blue-Flash-of-Lightning.

We have Thunder Mt, supposed to have been the home of the Thunder Bird one of the chief deities of the Indians. What stories there must be to be learnt of that. And all I can tell you is that it is one of the Mts of the North Fork Gap and probably overlooks the mythical "Lemon Diggings"-where mines of richest gold are somewhere hid. The Indians claimed some knowledge of this famous lost mine.

There are Crow's Nest Mt and Turtle Mt both connected with Indian legends, though the stories and the mts have been confused and perhaps the latter have been named more on account of their suitability to the name and from fancied resemblances suggested to the mind by the ideas of the names. Thus, the Crow's Nest Mt certainly resembles a huge inverted crow's nest, but the Indians say that a tribe of Crow Indians were once massacred by a war-party of Bloods among the mts tho' they claim it was beside the present Turtle Mt which the they aver was known among them as the Crows' Mt.
Again it is said that Turtle Mt was named from its resemblance to a turtle. But I remember reading some years ago tho' I merely recall the substance and for the

authenicity of the story I cannot vouch, that the Indians looked upon this Mt as a great sleeping turtle which "moved" in its sleep when it hurled off portions which of course were "slides", and that they were alwa always chary of camping near it, and later when talking with a geologist and engineer who lived some time in the Pass, he told me that there had been at least two other slides of huge proportions on this Mt but so long ago that the trees had since grown to full size on them and that the Mt was of such formation that there might have been slides at any time. Of course our Indians know nothing of turtles but the coast Indians held that the world was built on the back of the turtle, and in the aeons of the redman's habitation of this country, it is not improbable that they knew the turtle and its habits or had brought the knowledge with them.

Returning to the early history, there is the story of Massacre Butte, a tale full of the fierce tragedy and pitiless chance of t those early days. The Indians of the south were very fierce and lawless and travelling parties were in great danger in crossing the plains, therefor they found it much safer to travel along the foot of the Mts when passing thro the country. At one time a party known to have been some German traders were travelling to the north with their families when they discovered thay we were being followed by Indians so they chose this butte which rises at the extreme south end of the Porcupines overlooking th country about 2 and a half mile N.E. of Cowley, as probably serving as a goo good lookout and place of defense. Here they pitched their camp, the rings of stone now almost hidden by earth and grass but still to be traced, show where their tepees were, and for many years traces of a white man's camp were to be found there, such as a child's leather boots, shreds of garments battered kettles and broken utensils and the charred remains of wagons. Tradition related that the entire party was killed wi with the exception of one girl who was taken captive but later was also killed as being the cause of trouble among the young bucks, and it is known that a chief of the Blackfeet for many years carried as a trophy a scalp of flaxen colored tresses.

As a sequel to this, G.W. Gill of Pinche Creek, who was always deeply interested in Indian lore and relics, found on the bank o of the creek near his house, a skull which

was pronounced to be that of a European girl, so it was very probably there that that the unfortunate girl met her untimely ~~end.~~ terrible fate.

Yes, in our search for Indian legends and traditions, I feel sure we shall have to delve deeply and persistently and with sympathy, and we shall have to be allowed sufficient scope of imagination in working on the material we get, else we will miss much that is precious.

I have just read recently in the papers a legend of the north country. Dried Meat Hill, 40 miles from Medicine Hat. Cree Medicine Legend of Medicine Hat. Cree Medicine man crossing river, wind caught his hat, omen of bad luck. Blackfeet successful. Legend of the Sun Dance. Blackfoot name. Chief had three sons Kenna - the Blood, Peigan, third - nameless. first two mighty hunters - third returned always empty-handed. Chief rubbed his feet naming him Satsegnea or Blackfeet. Indian legend of Creation. Manitou Old Man. Napio. made a man of clay & baked him - first pale - paleskin a failure so tried again - little deeper but not satisfied. Third - deep red satisfied.

Legend of Old Man river.

Whoop Up - at forks of Belly & St Mary's River - 1874 - Trading Post - American traders - D. W. Davis in charge
30 miles from Mac Leod
"The Massacre Ground" - 1872 - 40 miles north of border near Ft Walsh

Slaid Off - Slide Out - on Belly River

Fort Kipp - Joe Kipp - trading post at forks of Belly & Old Mans River - scout and interpreter

Assiniboine Indians - Chief Piapot - slaughtered camp of Peigans
Jerry Potts headed party to drive them out of country.
Mac Leod - 1874 - Colonel Macleod
Cronfort - & "Stamixotokan" held first pow-wow - Dec 1st - 1874
Massacre Butte - Old Sun - Blackfoot - Cypress Hills - 200 miles east of Mac Leod
Calgary - 1876.
Ft Edmonton.
Blackfoot - Treaty at Crossing 1877
Lethbridge - 1881.
1870 - battle of tribes on banks where town now is.
Sawmill in Porcupine 1881